DRAFT for DISCUSSION WITH STAFF

*Report to the Board of Trustees, Apiti School*

**Appraisal of the performance of the Principal and teaching staff, 2011**

From Brian Coles, Appraiser.

**Collecting the evidence**

I have visited Apiti School on five occasions during 2011. Each visit lasted a full school day and included observations in classrooms, discussions with students and staff and work with the staff on policies or targets. On one occasion I met with the Board.

The staff have also worked with me in the small schools cluster (Weber, Apiti, Porangahau), which has focussed on developing students awareness of and abilities to learn how to learn and the development of schools as learning communities in which everyone is a learner and a potential teacher as well.

The Board will be aware that I have been associated with Apiti School over a number of years and have worked with the staff on several national educational developments including science exemplars, assessment for learning and the New Zealand Curriculum, often using Apiti as a model for other schools or inviting Apiti staff to present to teacher and school seminars. I have used evidence from this long experience as well as the observations made this year to respond to the Registered Teachers Criteria and the Professional Standards for Principals in the report that follows.

**Appraisal of the staff against the Registered Teachers Criteria**

The staff work closely together and the programme, planning for learning and school culture involve the whole-school. Therefore for most criteria the comments I have to make apply to the staff collectively. In some cases an exceptional performance or personal goal needs to be recognised and I have added an individual comment.

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| **Criteria** | **Key Indicators** | **Comment** |
| establish and maintain effective professional relationships focused on the learning and well-being of all äkonga | engage in ethical, respectful, positive and collaborative professional relationships with: • äkonga teaching colleagues, support staff and other  professionals •whänau and other carers of äkonga •agencies, groups and individuals in the  community | The Apiti school community are well served by their teaching staff in this area. Students are treated with respect, in fact leadership and taking responsibility are expected of them. The purpose of their being at school is evident and the teaching purposeful.  There is no school in the country that makes more use of its community and community events to enrich its students’ curriculum experience.  Mary has an exceptional ability to recruit outside experts to enrich the students learning or to work with the staff on school developments such as computers or staff PD.  There is a remarkably stable teaching and ancilliary team of people associated with the school who work well as a team and with whom the teaching staff have maintained respectful relationships over many years in some cases.  The staff are very much aware of the community they serve and make strenuous efforts to involve whanau in student learning. The use of e-portfolios is probably admired more as an educational innovation in the wider New Zealand educational community than in the local community. |
| demonstrate commitment to promoting the well-being of all äkonga | take all reasonable steps to provide and maintain a teaching and learning environment that is physically, socially, culturally and emotionally safe  ii. acknowledge and respect the languages, heritages and cultures of all äkonga  iii. comply with relevant regulatory and statutory requirements | There is no question the staff are there for the students. They make every endeavour to ensure all students are progressing as well as they are able and build a learning environment that is safe , but very stimulating.  The students all know they are progressing, in fact they have to report on this to their parents or carers themselves!  There is from the staff respect for students backgrounds and cultures and excellent efforts have been made to incorporate elements of Maori tikanga in to the school curriculum.  Any student whose progress is causing concern is targeted for interventions aimed at accelerating their progress |
| demonstrate commitment to bicultural partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand | demonstrate respect for the heritages, languages and cultures of both partners to the Treaty of Waitangi | The programme includes opportunity for all students to learn some Maori tikanga and at least two families have students enrolled who identify as Maori.  Both staff are keen to respond to requests for an opportunity to learn Te Reo although this is difficult to arrange. |
| demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional learning and development of personal professional practice | i. identify professional learning goals in consultation with colleagues  ii. participate responsively in professional learning opportunities within the learning community  iii. initiate learning opportunities to advance personal professional knowledge and skills | The staff set targets and goals for improvement of student learning and work to achieve these.  In 2011 they have joined three clusters of like schools facilitated by outside providers, each focussed on one of the goals.  In the cluster I facilitate Apiti have made a significant contribution. They are always willing to try new approaches that may enhance learning and their enquiry is increasingly sophisticated.  The most recent innovation in classrooms I noticed on my last visit was the ‘Daily Five’ approach to literacy, which should fit well into existing programmes.  I am looking forward to the teachers reflections on their learning in 2011.  I suspect one reflection will be that their enthusiasm for PD needs to be moderated in 2012 so they have more weekends for personal relaxation and recreation.  They share a strong philosophy about teaching and learning that is very evident in the programmes. |
| show leadership that contributes to effective teaching and learning | actively contribute to the professional learning community  ii. undertake areas of responsibility effectively | The staff actively organise the formation of clusters and Mary in particular takes a lead role in negotiating with other schools.  Nicki is particularly well-respected for her contributions to professional learning groups and often demonstrates how reflection is a key to teacher learning. I have learnt a great deal by interviewing students in her class as she trials new approaches.  Apiti School is well run and well organised and both teachers spend a great deal of their own time on school matters. |
| conceptualise, plan and implement an appropriate learning programme | articulate clearly the aims of their teaching, give sound professional reasons for adopting these aims, and implement them in their practice  ii. through their planning and teaching, demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of relevant content, disciplines and curriculum documents | Apiti has one of the best examples of the New Zealand curriculum in action in New Zealand. There are strong and effective programmes in literacy and numeracy and an approach to integrated learning across the whole curriculum using authentic contexts that is a model for other schools.  The staff have presented both their ‘big picture’ which makes sense of all the mandatory requirements on schools at present, and their curriculum in action to teacher seminars and visiting groups of teachers.  The whanau group structure and the on-going projects in the school provide opportunities for learning key competencies and leadership, as well as reasons to read and write that are unequalled elsewhere.  The way in which the elements of the programme across a term of learning are woven together and reach a climax in a performance or community event is masterful. |
| promote a collaborative, inclusive and supportive learning environment | i. demonstrate effective management of the learning setting which incorporates successful strategies to engage and motivate äkonga  ii. foster trust, respect and cooperation with and among äkonga | Mottivation for learnng is constantly a preoccupation of the staff. A range of strategies are continuously used including assessment for learning where students set their own goals and write their own reports on their progress, a sense of belonging and of responsibility associated with on-going projects and the whanau groups and the deliberate provision of opportunities to build learning to perform to a real audience in such annual events as the production, hosting other schools in the bush remnant or writing in the school blog.  Staff have also been working on further developing the school as a learning community because they recognise having to teach some-one else is an excellent way to reinforce learning. |
| 8.demonstrate in practice their knowledge and understanding of how äkonga5 learn | i.enable äkonga to make connections between their prior experiences and learning and their current learning activities  ii.provide opportunities and support for äkonga to engage with, practise and apply new learning to different contexts  iii. encourage äkonga to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour  iv. assist äkonga to think critically about information and ideas and to reflect on their learning | This is readily apparent in the way the staff effectively integrate the learning programme and use authentic contexts in which students have to apply their learning.  The school uses assessment for learning approaches that are the most effective way to enable students to take responsibility for their own learning. Both staff have presented their work in this area to teacher seminars and conferences.  Students are encouraged, actually required to reflect on their learning, including their learning of how to learn. This is an area chosen for teacher enquiry in 2011, where the staff are at the leading edge of practice. |
| 9. respond effectively to the diverse language and cultural experiences, and the varied strengths, interests and needs of individuals and groups of äkonga | i. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences on learning, by working effectively in the bicultural and multicultural contexts of learning in Aotearoa New Zealand  ii.select teaching approaches, resources, technologies and learning and assessment activities that are inclusive and effective for diverse äkonga  iii. modify teaching approaches to address the needs of individuals and groups of äkonga | The numeracy and literacy programmes are effectively personalised, each student with their own current goal. A wide range of resources are available to them and their teachers with very effective use made of computers in all areas of learning.  In integrated topics students often have a considerable range of choice about the specific topic they will study and the manner in which it is presented.  A range of assessment tools are used, including effective teacher observation while students are learning. The assessments are use diagnostically to plan next steps as well as to monitor and report progress.  Staff are always seeking and trialling new approaches to improve the rate of progress of students and they seek help when concerned about the progress of a particular student. |
| 10. work effectively within the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand | i. practise and develop the relevant use of te reo Mäori me ngä tikanga-a-iwi in context  ii. specifically and effectively address the educational aspirations of äkonga6 Mäori, displaying high expectations for their learning | The staff and BoT have yet to resolve how to respond to a request for instruction to be in Te Reo Maori. This is a considerable challenge.  However Maori student achievement and progress at the school is most satisfactory and the staff have high expectations of those students who identify as Maori. |
| 11. analyse and appropriately use assessmentinformation, which has been gathered formally and informally | i. analyse assessment information to identify progress and ongoing learning needs of äkonga  ii.use assessment information to give regular and ongoing feedback to guide and support further learning  iii. analyse assessment information to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching  iv. communicate assessment and achievement information to relevant members of the learning community  v.foster involvement of whänau in the collection and use of information about the learning of äkonga | Apiti is an assessment for learning school and has been used as a model by facilitators in this area.  A wide range of assessment tools are used diagnostically with students to enhance their learning, to monitor progress and to report accurately to parents.  Assessment information is collated and for school-wide review.  The sytem of continuous reporting using the school wiki is an innovation being watched across New Zealand.  Parents of students at Apiti are constantly encouraged to be involved in the learning of their students, whether as audience for performances, resource people or just interested spectators and conversationalists and readers of their students reflections on their wiki site.  Parent involvement in all aspects of the school is high and there is a high turnout for reporting conferences. |
| 12. use critical inquiry and problem-solving effectively in their professional practice | i. systematically and critically engage with evidence and professional literature to reflect on and refine practice  ii. respond professionally to feedback from members of their learning community  iii. critically examine their own beliefs, including cultural beliefs, and how they impact on their professional practice and the achievement of äkonga | The staff engage in critical enquiry and professional reading aimed at improving the effect of the school.  They set out to work with wider learning communities as has been noted already above.  PD facilitators and members of clusters these days engage in challenging practices and fairly robust discussions. The Apiti staff can always justify the choices they have made about their practice.  Nicki in particular, would be one of the most reflective teachers in the profession. |